British Waterways London

TOURISM AFLOAT

LEISURE NEWS FOR WATERSIDE BUSINESSES

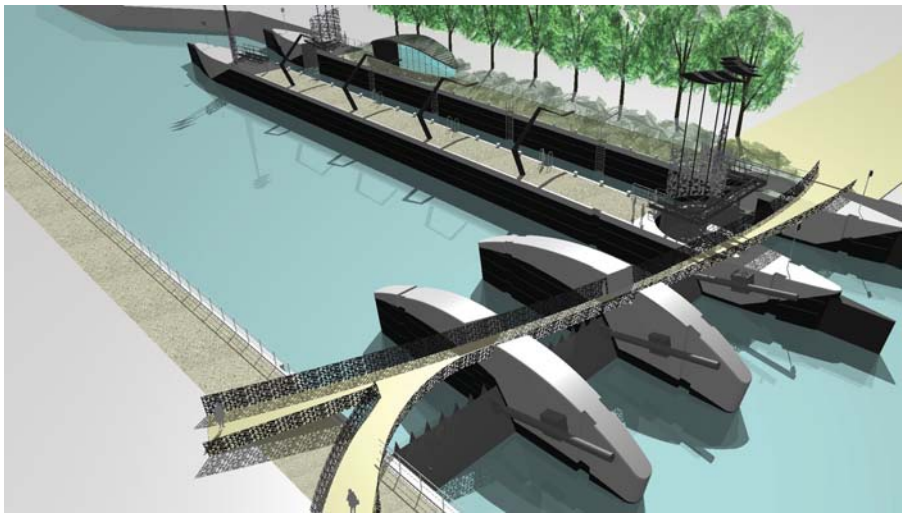
EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to the new look Tourism Afloat. In this issue we focus on two local businesses: Parndon Mill and Gordon Ramsay's The Narrow pub in Limehouse which has just opened to great reviews. The 'Two Tings' campaign promoting new safety measures on the Regent's Canal launches in June and there's a look at plans to regenerate City Road Basin and Tottenham Hale. Our highlight this winter was securing the funding and go ahead to start work on the restoration of Bow Back Rivers and for summer the season kicked off with a special gorilla boat trip from Little Venice in April. We hope you enjoy reading about all these activities and please let us know if you'd like us to feature your business in the next issue.

RESTORING LONDON'S OLYMPIC WATERWAYS

In February British Waterways (BW) announced the go ahead for the building of a new lock and water control structures on Prescott Channel. This £18.9m project will restore the Bow Back Rivers to navigation and enable up to 170,000 tonnes of construction materials to be carried into the Olympic Park by water. Part of an £18.9m project. The new lock will provide access for 350-tonne barges, taking up to 1,200 lorry journeys a week off the local roads and saving thousands of tonnes of CO_2.

The new lock is part of a Defra-backed recommendation for the sustainable restoration of the waterways in the Lower Lea Valley. Developed by BW, the Environment Agency and Natural England, together with a broad range of stakeholders, the recommendation promotes a green and accessible corridor along the waterways with a series of towpaths, cycleways, enhanced wildlife habitats and restored active waterways alongside new sustainable developments.



Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP, Olympics Minister: **"The restoration of the neglected waterways of the Lea Valley will be vital to achieving our commitment to make London 2012 environmentally sustainable. The new lock at Prescott Channel will make a significant contribution to the quality of life in the area as well as helping to deliver our aspiration to transport 50 per cent of all construction materials, by weight, to the Olympic site via rail or the waterways, considerably relieving congestion on the road network. This is what the Games can do: the sustainable regeneration of a long neglected area and the creation of a lasting improvement in the environment for generations to come."**

Working with our partner agencies BW plans to create new opportunities for leisure boats, water taxis, trip boats and floating restaurants on the Bow Back Rivers. Work began on the new lock in March 2007 and it is expected expected to be finished by summer 2008.
For more information visit www.britishwaterways.co.uk/olympics or call Debbie Walker on 020 7985 7227

TOWPATH SAFETY CAMPAIGN FOR REGENT'S CANAL

Pedestrians and cyclists who use the Regent's Canal are to benefit from a £446,000 towpath safety project, part of an ongoing London-wide BW programme to make towpaths safer, more attractive and accessible to the thousands of people who use them every day. Funded by Transport for London and BW, the improvements, which will run from Victoria Park to Camden Town, will include some towpath resurfacing, trial chicanes, rumble strips and new signage.

A Code of Conduct for all London's towpath users will be published and a new 'Two Tings' campaign launched with awareness days, bell give-aways, banners, advertisements in cycling press and a PR campaign. If you would like copies of the Code of Conduct leaflet to distribute through your business please contact **matthew.whitbread@britishwaterways.co.uk** or call **020 7985 7215**

Code of Conduct:

CYCLISTS

- Ring with 'Two Tings'
- Pass people slowly
- Give people space

PEDESTRIANS

- Listen for 'Two Tings'
- Allow cyclists to pass

REMEMBER

- Pedestrians have priority
- Considerate cycling is permitted
- Give way to oncoming users at bridges
- Be careful at bends & entrances

ENLIVENING TOTTENHAM'S WATERSPACE

Two new business barges, with designs based on historic sailing barges, are currently being built by BW for new moorings at Hale Wharf on the River Lee in Tottenham. Part of plans to breathe new life into the area's waterway, the two colourful and striking business barges will later be joined by two others of different designs, providing a distinctive and modern environment for small businesses.

The £1million business barge scheme is backed and funded by the European Regional Development Fund, the London Development Agency and BW and has already received strong interest from prospective tenants, including a gallery and an architect's firm.

BW's regeneration projects manager Tav Kazmi explains: **"Growing up in Birmingham, I saw at first hand how the revival of once underused waterways can transform whole communities. This is precisely what we want to do in Tottenham. The barges are an important first step towards the regeneration of the River Lee in Tottenham with other projects including a new footbridge, towpath improvements, new visitors moorings, a trip boat and even a working wharf for moving waste and recycled materials by barge."**

GORDON RAMSAY OPENS WATERSIDE PUB

Celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay has just opened his first pub - The Narrow at 44 Narrow Street in Limehouse. Located alongside Limehouse Lock in an historic Grade II-listed building once the Dockmaster's office, the building is now owned by the Waterside Pub Partnership, the joint venture between BW and Scottish & Newcastle.

Gordon Ramsay Holdings, which already operates nine restaurants in London, seven of which have Michelin stars, took over the lease of The Narrow last October.

Set up in 2004, the Waterside Pub Partnership was created to allow BW to gain financially from the growing number of people visiting pubs on its increasingly popular waterways. BW's 50% share of the profits from the groundbreaking partnership, which also aims to increase visitors and enhance recreation by the waterside, will directly contribute to the upkeep of its canal and river network.

Mark Blackwell, business development manager for BW London, comments: **"Over 33million visits are made to our canals and rivers in London each year and our research shows that half of visitor spend at the waterside is on food and drink. The formation of the Waterside Pub Partnership is part of growing the attraction of waterways as a place for leisure orientated companies to invest. Something we are pleased to report Mr Ramsay has clearly latched on to!"**

SUMMER PROMOTIONS

Visit London announced plans to promote the capital's waterways again for summer 2007 with a £400,000 River and Waterways campaign. Visit London is also working on a London Villages promotion which will launch this summer and include Brentford and Hanwell.

London Zoo and **London Waterbus** teamed up with BW London to celebrate the opening of ZSL London Zoo's new Gorilla Kingdom exhibit. A competition ran in Metro offering five readers the chance to win a special family day out at Easter featuring a trip on London Waterbus to the zoo from Little Venice (pictured below) with 'gorilla' entertainment and free entry to the zoo.

Over 700 competition entries were received, the best response to a competition TfL's Metro Travel page has ever had.

This summer BW is supporting **Lee Valley Regional Park Authority's** celebration of its 40th anniversary. To find out more about the events and activities taking place, visit www.leevalleypark.org.uk or check out the events section on **www.waterscape.com**

UP AND DOWN THE CITY ROAD

Plans for the regeneration of City Road Basin in Islington have taken another step forward with London Borough of Islington granting full planning permission for 259 City Road. The development is a joint venture between Groveworld, Miller Developments and BW and is part of a major masterplan to transform this historic Regent's Canal site and open it up to full public access for the first time. The plans comprise a new building at the southern (City Road) end of the basin with 295 new apartments (including 93 affordable homes) and new public open space.

Cllr James Kempton, Leader of London Borough of Islington, says: **"As well as providing new homes for people on low and modest incomes, the basin's development will create a new civic space for people to enjoy, along with leisure facilities like restaurants, a health centre with doctor's surgery and new premises for Islington Boat Club."**

GETTING INTO SHAPE

By the end of March BW had completed its annual winter stoppage programme, bringing the total spend across the year on maintenance works for its London waterways to £13million.
As well as removing over 3,300 tonnes of rubbish, 400 tonnes of weed and cutting back miles of grass and vegetation, this year seven locks received new gates, two locks and three bridges were repaired, three miles of towpaths were upgraded and areas of the rivers Lee and Stort were dredged.
Some works require towpath and navigation closures. Canal users can ask for email updates from **www.waterscape.com/stoppages**

Jon Guest, customer operations manager for BW London, explains: **"A 200 year-old canal requires constant maintenance and we employ specialist staff and contractors to carry out the repairs. Throughout the works we give special consideration to the canal's unique environment and wildlife and we are able to minimise disruption to visitors by carrying out the majority of our works over the winter months."**

BW RECRUITS MARKETING AGENCY

BW has developed a new marketing strategy which will help us deliver our 2012 vision to double the number of visits to our waterways. Our approach is to deliver more efficient and effective marketing at a reduced cost. During BW's national restructure over the winter months, the number of marketing staff within the organisation has been reduced and a bigger central marketing budget is set to deliver consistent marketing, both locally and nationally. We will start developing and implementing all our marketing activity in line with the strategy from April 2007. At the first stage of the process we will appoint a marketing and PR agency, with the tender and selection process to be completed shortly. Local and national marketing campaigns will follow, starting this summer.

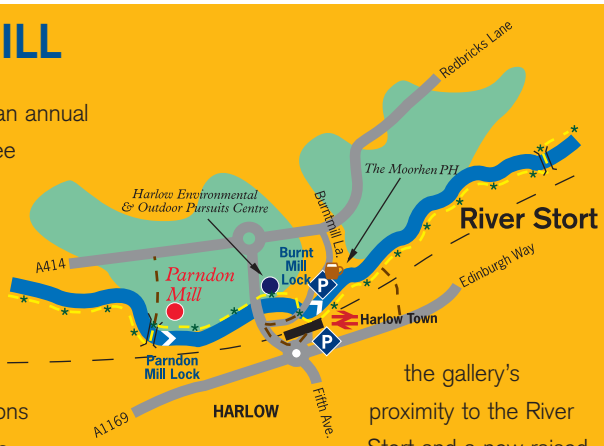
BUSINESS FOCUS: PARNDON MILL

The River Stort is a popular destination for walkers, cyclists, anglers and boaters who are attracted to its rural landscapes and historic mill. One of the highlights along its banks is Parndon Mill in Harlow. Originally used for milling flower, in the1960s it was taken over by potter Sally Anderson who was later joined by colleague Roger Lee. Together they restored the mill and ran a successful company producing hand decorated tiles. Since 2004 the mill has been used as a centre for creative activity. Artists based at the mill range from painters, sculptors and print makers, to photographers, potters and architects.

Each September they hold an annual open studio for visitors to see how and where they work, providing a unique insight into the creative process.

On the ground floor *The Gallery* at Parndon Mill presents a series of exhibitions each lasting about six weeks.

From 5 July 2007 a 'Waterworks' exhibition will show works of art inspired by water including paintings, prints, glass and sculpture. This exhibition will celebrate the gallery's proximity to the River Stort and a new raised walkway is being designed by the mill's resident artists to be installed by BW this summer. For more information visit **www.parndonmill.co.uk**



BULLS BRIDGE REFURBISHMENT

A four-week £30,000 project to refurbish Bulls Bridge at the junction of the Paddington Arm and Grand Union Main Line was completed in March. The project, which was funded jointly by London Borough of Hillingdon and BW, involved carefully removing old paint, cleaning the surface, repointing brickwork and then repainting.

Florence Salberter, heritage advisor for BW London, explains: **"The work to this historic landmark and Grade II listed structure was carefully planned with input from English Heritage and with the support of the London Boroughs of Hillingdon and Ealing conservation officers. Our contractor, Morrison Construction, used a water-based paint stripper and high pressure steam cleaner to carefully remove the paint first. The brick work was then repointed with a lime mortar and finally repainted with three coats of lime earth paint which allows the brickwork to breathe and retains the landmark status the structure has gained locally as 'the white bridge'."**

WHAT DO YOUR CUSTOMERS THINK

Customer surveys carried out in summer and autumn 2006 revealed some useful insights from our business, boating and general leisure customers. BW is using this valuable customer feedback to improve both the physical waterway environment and the way we interact with our customers.

Last year only 58% of BW's boating customers were satisfied with the clearance of rubbish and weed from the water compared with 75% in 2005. Boating customers also mentioned the need for more recycling points so we are looking at ways to improve our performance in both these areas.

While 92% of towpath users are satisfied with safety on the towpaths, the number of people describing safety as 'excellent' has gone down from 5% to 3.5%. Concerns for safety along busy stretches of towpath, especially on the Regent's Canal are being tackled through a £446,000 project due to be completed by May 2007 (see the Two Tings article).

Face to face surveys were carried out with visitors to the key waterside destinations of Little Venice, Camden, Brentford, West India Quay, Bishop's Stortford and Harlow. In the outer London locations at Brentford, Bishop's Stortford and Harlow visitors want more cafés, pubs and restaurants as well as trip boats and boat hire. In all locations visitors would like to see more boating activity to provide a focus for their visit.

Since 2000 BW has invested over £600 million in maintaining and improving its waterways. However, waterside businesses expect more from us. Around half responding to the business survey think our maintenance of the waterways was good, very good or excellent and a similar proportion said the same about how we deal with them and their business.

BW is determined to improve its relationship with waterside businesses as their success is key to our goal of more vibrant waterways used by more people.

If you would like a full report of the market research please contact Nerissa Bryden.

EVENTS

Tourism Businesses' Marketing Meeting
The annual meeting with local waterway leisure businesses to discuss marketing activity took place on 16 January 2007. The event was well attended by waterside attractions and operators such as ZSL London Zoo, Museum in Docklands, London Canal Museum, Lee Valley Boat Centre, Walker's Quay, Parndon Mill Gallery, Camden Starbucks and SS Robin. The meeting was also attended by key tourism agencies and local authorities including Tower Hamlets, the London Development Agency, Visit London and TourEast London.

Brentford Waterside Festival will take place on five successive Sundays this summer with a host of activities for all. 29 July, 5/12/19/26 August 2007

Canalway Cavalcade
At this year's IWA Canalway Cavalcade boating festival we will be informing visitors about the work of BW including patrol, waterway operatives, customer service, education and recreation. 5/6/7 May 2007

For a full list of events taking place on the waterways this year, please visit **www.waterscape.com/events**

If you would like to list your events on waterscape.com please contact Matthew Whitbread at matthew.whitbread@britishwaterways.co.uk

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